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Getting Up: Gentrification, Gang Injunctions and Graffiti in Echo Park, Los Angeles

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by

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ABSTRACT

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In the summer of 2011 the city of Los Angeles granted Echo Park, a neighborhood to the immediate northwest of downtown, a 45-million-dollar renovation grant to clean up Echo Park Lake. During the grand reopening of the park in 2013, the neighborhood of Echo Park was simultaneously met with the Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction, a civil law suit against six alleged gangs in Echo Park. Despite the neighborhood's significantly decreased crime rate the gang injunction was quietly passed without notification. Using Marcia Ochoa's methodology of time travel and huecos negros (2016), I examine a long history of dispossession and displacement in Echo Park beginning with Chavez Ravine and continuing into The Belmont Tunnel dubbed the graffiti mecca of the west coast as examples of displacement due to what I call an affective economy of white pleasure. Additionally, I look at how stipulations in gang injunctions by policing what is considered non-normative expressions of femininity and masculinity through style and dress on bodies of color. I argue that graffiti and placas become visual spatial disruptors to ongoing narratives of Latinx erasure in Echo Park.

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The Beginning of the End: An Introduction to Gentrification in Echo Park

(Image 1. Close up of tag on the Lady of the Lake in Echo Park, Los Angeles.)

In 2011, the Los Angeles neighborhood of Echo Park received $45 million dollars to close down and renovate Echo Park Lake. Renovations included cleaning the lake and creating new tourist infrastructures such as paddle boats and a coffee shop. Two years later, coinciding with Echo Park's reopening, was the implementation of The Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction. This injunction was a civil lawsuit against six alleged gangs in Echo Park. As part of the lawsuit, the injunction sought to criminalize "gang-related activity" including graffiti, loitering and other forms of perceived gang influenced behavior. Long term Echo Park residents were made unwelcome from the park itself fearing that they would be marked as gang affiliated.

I argue that the remodeling of Echo Park Lake along with the implementation of the Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction prioritize spaces of pleasure for white bodies at the expense of Latinx communities. Gang injunctions have also been established in border areas that are

undergoing revitalization projects and have increased property values.[1] Injunctions strategically placed in bordering areas of gentrification allow law enforcement to remove youth of color from white middle class residential and commercial areas. Muñiz suggests that the biggest success of the injunction was its power to terrorize people into fleeing from public space and even their own neighborhood.[2]

As I've shown in previous work, this gang injunction was proposed and passed despite the neighborhood's significantly decreased crime rates.[3] Local organizers rallied against the gang injunction because injunctions create stigmas toward alleged gang members. As a result, local community members and organizations, including Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) and Standing Together Advocating for our Youth (STAY), opposed the injunction. Nonetheless, it was signed and put into law on September 24, 2013, by the Los Angeles city prosecuting attorney Michael N. Feuer.[4] In Los Angeles, where there are over forty-six gang injunctions, criminalized Brown and Black people find little to no space to freely move without confronting racial, class, and gendered boundaries that gang injunctions impose. Gang injunctions in Los Angeles act to control access to public space throughout the city.

In light of the history of displacement and current developments, anti-gentrification activism emerged in Los Angeles, one of the most infamous groups is Defend Boyle Heights (DBH), a grassroots organization that has creatively challenged the process of gentrification which has displaced the social and cultural networks built by the Latinx community in Boyle

[1] Ana, Muñiz. "Maintaining racial boundaries: Criminalization, neighborhood context, and the origins of gang injunctions." Social Problems 61, no. 2 (2014): 216-236.
[2]Ibid.
[3] Kimberly, Soriano. "From Echo Parque to Hipsterlandia: Challenging Gang Injunctions and Policing". *La Gente* 44(1)
[4] Ibid.

Heights since the 1940s.[56] These organizers have used slogans such as "We will not be the next Echo Park" to resist gentrification in their community. Yet this framing reifies narratives of Echo Park as an already gentrified neighborhood. These narratives also miss the ongoing anti-gentrification organizing efforts in Echo Park and mask less legible methods of resistance to gentrification, which include graffiti writing.

My project interrogates how racialized people in Echo Park, Los Angeles navigate processes of whitewashing and gentrification, and how their visual art--including a form of graffiti writing that I will refer to throughout this thesis as "tagging"--becomes a form of resistance to and critique of their displacement. Contested spaces, where struggles over aesthetics, visibility, and belonging are played out, can be conceptualized as what I term *layered geographies*. The concept reminds us that the creation of white space via whitewashing relies on the enforcement of disciplining power and the policing of geographic boundaries for brown people.

I use Marcia Ochoa's methodology of huecos negros[7] and time travel to exemplify how contemporary technologies of white cisheteropatriarchy that police public space connect to violent regimes of policing started since the conquest. Ochoa argues that time travel is useful towards looking at different huecos negros or black holes that show recurring processes of the policing of gender performance for marginalized subjects. One site or Hueco negro that I will use to contextualize my project is the displacement of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans from Chavez Ravine. I look at how the prioritization of a baseball stadium ultimately won over the livelihood and shelter of Brown communities. A second hueco negro that I look at is the

[5] Ryan, Reft. The Shifting Cultures of Multiracial Boyle Heights. KCET History and Society https://www.kcet.org/history-society/the-shifting-cultures-of-multiracial-boyle-heights
[6] A predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood east of downtown Los Angeles that has played a significant role in the Chicano Power Movement.
[7] Hueco negro translates to black hole

Belmont Tunnel, an abandoned train yard that local Latinx communities repurposed into a graffiti yard and sports playground. The third hueco negro is Echo Park Lake and the various stipulations under the Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction that police gender performance and expressions of youth of color. Finally, I look at an archive of graffiti as what I call spatial disruptions to gentrification and whitewashing.

Background: Contextualizing Echo Park

Echo Park is a predominantly Latinx neighborhood with significant Mexican, Central American, and Filipinx communities. Echo Park is two miles northwest of Downtown Los Angeles and has since the late 1990s seen vast changes in its demographics due to gentrification. The neighborhood of Echo Park began as a neighborhood of largely middle class and white residents. Various studios in the 1920s used the park as a set for many silent films. Some celebrities such as Ayn Rand, Steve McQueen and more recently Leonardo DiCaprio have resided in Echo Park.[8] The Echo Park Historical Society (EPHS) notes that after World War II, more Latinos began to move into the area.

Due to affordable rents, Echo Park has a tradition of attracting creative groups, activist groups and marginalized communities. During the 1940s, activists such as Alice McGrath who was key in the defense of young Mexican men who were charged for murder in the Sleepy Lagoon Trial resided in Echo Park.[9] Black civil rights attorney Loren Miller who argued against restrictive racial covenants also resided in the neighborhood. During the 1950s Echo Park, similar to many other areas in Los Angeles experienced white flight, and as white residents flew

[8] "Echo Park: Los Angeles, California." American Planning Association. 2008. Accessed January 28, 2019. https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/neighborhoods/2008/echopark.htm.

[9] On August 2, 1942 22 Chicano youths were indicted for the murder of Jose Diaz. The event became known as the Sleepy Lagoon trial and received national media attention as it focused on Mexican Americans and criminality. It became the largest mass trial in California history with 17 defendants. Three of the defendants were convicted of first degree murder.

to the "safety" of the suburbs, Mexicans and Asians took advantage of low housing prices and moved in.[10]

Along with affordable rents, Echo Park was home to El Nayarit, a restaurant on Sunset Blvd now The Echo. The Nayarit hosted Club Fire and Club Fantasy in the late 90's which was a hub for Latinx gay and lesbians.[11] *Historian* Natalia Molina, urges us to think about Echo Park as a multicultural crossroads which differs the experiences of Latinx people in Echo Park compared to more traditional Mexican neighborhoods such as East Los Angeles.[12] While a white presence in Echo Park can be historically tracked since the 1920s, drastic changes in neighborhood culture was not seen until the late 1990's, signifying the profound impact of the most recent wave of whites to the neighborhood.

	2000	2010	2016
White	11%	46.7%(21.1% non-Hispanic White)	(24.4% non-Hispanic White)
Black	2.6%	2.9%	4.2%
Asian	18.6%	17.3%	16.9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.2%	1.3%	1.7%
Latino or Hispanic	65%	57%	53% (30% Mexican, 22.2% as other Hispanic of Latino)

(Figure 1. 90026 Demographic Data from 2000, 2010 and 2016 Census)

According to the 2010 and 2016 Demographic Data on zip code 90026 which covers Echo Park, Silverlake, and North Westlake 46.7% of community members identified as white and about half of that (21.1%) identified as non-Hispanic white, 2.9% identify as Black or African American, 17.3% as Asian and 1.3% as American Indian and Alaska Native, 57% identify as

[10] Ibid.
[11]Sandra De La Loza. The Pocho Research Society Field Guide to L.A.: Monuments and Murals of Erased and Invisible Histories. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press. 2011
[12] Natalia, Molina. 82

Hispanic or Latino. By 2016, there is a slight increase of 24.4% of community members identifying as white alone meaning non-Hispanic white and 53.2% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Of that 53.2%, 30% identify as Mexican and 22.2% identify as other Hispanic or Latino which most likely consists of Central American community members.[13] Figure 1 encapsulates the change in demographic between 2010 through 2016. Gentrification of Echo Park implies that the demographic has changed dramatically. Activists have long used the slogan "We will not be the next Echo Park" in efforts to preserve their communities yet fail to notice that the dominant demographic in Echo Park is still Latinx.

Echo Park's demographic has changed along with its median income. The median income has increased from $45,560 in 2011 to $51,568 in 2016. The mean income, which is most accurate in representing significant population change, increased from $63,548 to $77,444. According to USC's Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, more than 5,000 Latinx and 2,000 Asian Echo Park community members were displaced during the six year period.[14] Between 2011 and 2016 Echo Park saw the median home values nearly double going from $427,000 to $779,000. Median rents in Echo Park also saw an increase of 42% stemming from $2,000 in 2011 to $2,840. As housing costs rise between 2000 and 2014, there is a significant decrease in Echo Park's population by 12%.[15] Echo Park has experienced drastic changes in cost of housing, neighborhood demographic, and culture. What began as a neighborhood with affordable rents and coveted neighborhoods due to its proximity to downtown Los Angeles has become inaccessible to so many families that created roots and cultural networks in the area.

Graffiti and Placas: Tools for Placemaking

[13] U.S. Census Bureau; American FactFinder; 2010 Census;
<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>
[14] California Immigrant Policy Center, Resilience in an Age of Inequality: Immigrant Contributions to California. 2017 8
[15] Tracy, Jeanne Rosenthal. Transit-Oriented development? More like transit rider displacement. 2018

In Echo Park murals and graffiti pieces painted by famous graffiti writers Eyer, Atlas and Cache fill the walls down Sunset, Temple and Beverly Blvd with chickens and Zapatista figures. Since the early 1990s, these unique characters have become known as part of the Echo Park, Westlake and Historic Filipinotown landscape. Along with Eyer, Atlas and Cache graffiti pieces, less elaborate graffiti writing such as placas—gang graffiti and name tags from solo graffiti writers—continue to be seen all along Echo Park. My project examines graffiti writing as a form of anti-gentrification visual resistance that disrupt narratives of Echo Park's Latinx erasure produced by gentrification.

I use the term tag or tagging as a catch all term that encompasses multiple forms of graffiti using multiple mediums on a variety or surfaces. Tags can include elaborate graffiti pieces and bombs, which are quicker and less elaborate than pieces. A name tag is writing on a wall that usually includes the name of the person tagging and if they belong to a crew. I use the term tag, to also encompass gang *placas*, or gang graffiti which is often more criminalized due to an association with a gang. Tags also encompass slap tags which are stickers that taggers use to write their name on and circulate all over the city. I also include scribes, writing on hard surfaces, within my definition of tags. Scribes are done with a sharp object usually a blade on glass, metal or any other hard surfaces.

I use the term tag, or graffiti writing in efforts to destabilize acceptable forms of graffiti that have become popularized by white artists such as Obey and Banksy. [16] By reclaiming the illegality of graffiti's raw beginnings, I am situating this art form within working class Black radical aesthetics and traditions. Complex burners and pieces are often more respected by both graffiti and non-graffiti communities because they entail precision and skill, while placas and tags

[16] Shepard Fairey and Banksy are known for explicit political wheat pasting and other forms of street art. They have navigated the graffiti world and been accepted into museums and galleries.

are criminalized because of their gang affiliation and perceived lack of aesthetic value. Rather than focus on the ways that graffiti has emerged as an art commodity by galleries and dealers, I am interested in centering the criminalization of tagging as a methodology of gentrification, and discuss the ways that tagging can thus be read as a deviant form of resistance to forces of displacement and policing.

As an art form graffiti has been historically used by marginalized communities for a variety of reasons including but not limited to developing and showcasing artistic ability, political protest, and to signify presence. Hip-hop graffiti and gang graffiti are two very different forms of writing that offer visual disruptions to narratives of gentrification in Echo Park. My research theorizes how gentrification exposes *layered geographies* of policing and exclusion. Layered geographies describes different cartographies carved and traveled by both marginal and powerful agents within the same community, attending to different and often conflicting processes of navigating space for racialized people, as well as those that enforce boundaries and discipline space.

The genealogy of placas or gang graffiti starts much earlier than East coast Hip-hop graffiti. According to Francois Chastanet, *Cholo Writing: Latino Gang Graffiti in Los Angeles*, LA has the longest history of street writing in the world. One of the earliest forms of graffiti writing is in the 1930s when Latino shoeshine boys marked their names with daubers to claim space on sidewalks.[17] These early renditions of placas became a symbol of territorial street boundaries where predominantly Mexican and Mexican-Americans write the name of their gang and a roll call of the members. Typically, a placa is written in Old English font, which is used in official legal documents, to denote a public presence in the streets.

[17] Fraçois Chastanet and Howard, Gribble. Cholo Writing: Latino Gang Graffiti in Los Angeles. Scb Distributors, 2009

Mexican American art scholars such as Marcos Sanchez Tranquilino argue that placas should not be read as vandalism but rather as a visual system developed by Mexican American gangs to "keep a public check" on the abuse of power of other gangs in their streets.[18] In *Space, Power and Youth Culture: Mexican American Graffiti and Chicano Murals in East Los Angele*s, Tranquilino frames space in relation to graffiti writing as a limited resource in the gang territorial economy. He writes, "homeboys appropriated 'valueless' spaces, not to vandalize them for the sake of destruction of private property, but to use them for their own needs".[19] Tranquilino describes spaces such as alleys, fences, side walls of stores and housing projects as "valueless" spaces to dominant society. Space available to Mexican American youths, within what Tranquilino calls "the territorial economy", in working poor neighborhoods for recreation and community are restricted due to the "carving-up" of these neighborhoods done by developers.[20] Placas, argues Tranquilino was a method in which youth could divide the small amount of space that was left.

Under similar circumstances, Black youth in northeastern cities such as Philadelphia and The Bronx in New York City created Hip-hop culture that gave birth to a type of graffiti called wild style. The South Bronx, dubbed the mecca of hip-hop, was often considered a site of collateral damage for policies and projects motivated by urban renewal. Between the late 1930s and late 1960s city planner Robert Moses implemented public work projects such as highways, parks, and housing projects restructured New York City. Moses implementation of the Cross-Bronx Expressway cut directly through the most heavily populated working-class areas in the Bronx, which required the demolition of hundreds of residential and commercial buildings. During this time, around 60,000 Bronx homes were demolished and 170,000 people were forced

[18] Marcos, Sánchez- Tranquilino. "Space, Power, and Youth Culture: Mexican American Grafitti and Chicano Murals in East Los Angeles, 1972-1978." in Looking High and Low: Art and Cultural Identity, 55–88. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1995.
[19] Ilib. 76
[20] Ilib. 76

to relocate.[21] These neighborhoods were mostly populated by Jewish, Black and Puerto Rican communities.

Disinvestment and displacement on behalf of New York City administration exasperated housing conditions in the Bronx. Tricia Rose, author of *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* writes about the conditions that led to the creation of Hip-Hop by Black and Puerto Rican communities. Rose thoroughly explains how frantic landlords sold their property as quickly as they could to slumlords which in turn accelerated the flight of white tenants to northern sections of the Bronx and into Westchester. Rose further explains two critical events that made the South Bronx a "national symbol of ruin and isolation".[22] One event being the extensive power outage in 1977 where hundreds of stores were looted and vandalized. The second event Rose describes is the abandoned buildings in the South Bronx that became central popular cultural icons. These conditions are what Rose describes as the landscape that had Afro-diasporic communities create something from nothing.

The intense community conditions created by the Cross-Bronx Expressway went unrecognized by New York City administration. The disinvestment and depletion of the Bronx demolished networks and community resources that were in place before marginalized communities were displaced. Within this landscape Rose, calls the formation of hip hop as a practice of forging alternative local identities that include fashions and language, street names, and neighborhood crews and possess due to the lack of formal networks and disrupted informal networks. Rose writes, "at a time when budget cuts in school music programs drastically reduced access to traditional forms of instrumentation and composition, inner-city youths increasingly

[21] Tricia, Rose. Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America. Wesleyan University Press. 1994.
[22] Tricia, Rose. 90

relied on recorded sound".[23] Rose engages with Dick Hebdige's *Subculture the Meaning of Styl*e, to signal the similarities between punk and Hip-Hop as both utilizing style as "a gesture of refusal or as a form of oblique challenges to structures of domination."[24]

The "origin" story of graffiti writing has known been a mix of beginnings. Joe Austin, author of *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Became an Urban Crisis in New York* writes, "[graffiti] writing is a complex cultural practice that continues to evolve, and as such, it bears the marks of several originating influences. These influences form a web of historical and cultural connections, a tangled, rhizome-like network that works against establishing a clear, singular 'root'." [25] Graffiti scholars almost exclusively start with infamous CORNBREAD, a young Black boy from Philadelphia in the mid-1960s. CORNBREAD or Darryl McCray was said to have written his name all along a bus route to catch the attention of a girl that he was interested in and later evolved into the first real "king" of graffiti.[26] Although in different states, graffiti writing also was seen around the same time in New York.

Simultaneous to CORNBREAD's rise to fame, "Names, Graffiti and Culture" written by New York City educator Herbert Kohl in the mid-1960's details Kohl's student culture as "a culture of teenagers who wrote their nicknames on the walls of their Washington Heights neighborhood".[27] In his article Kohl elaborately explains how many of his students cannot read or write but can read the names written on the walls in their neighborhood of Spanish Harlem. Graffiti writing slowly took form from names written with markers to elaborate pieces done by spray paint. In 1972 a graffiti writer called SUPERKOOL attached fat caps from cans of spray

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[23] Ilib. 93
[24] Ilib. 97
[25] Joe, Austin. Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City. 38
[26] Gregory J. Snyder. Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground. New York. NYU Press. 2009
[27] Gregory J. Snyder. Graffiti Lives 23

starch onto cans of spray paint to expand the width of the spray. His style was known to be bigger and more elaborate thus credited in creating the first masterpiece.[28]

Austin writes that observers closer to the writing community describe it being compromised of mostly African Americans and Latinos from working poor families. Northern Manhattan, the South Bronx and central Brooklyn being the prime areas in New York where writing was mostly done were also the poorest neighborhoods. Additionally, Austin writes about a decrease in women writers when graffiti writing shifted onto New York's trains. Many women writers were uninvited to graffiti groups and weary of sexual violence in the train yards.

New York City local government did not respond well to graffiti. This new "art form" was constructed as an urban problem, decline in quality of life and as a central example of the extent of urban decay.[29] Austin writes, "writing is not, as its critics commonly claim, simply a cultural aberration indicative of social decay in the central city. It is a long-standing aesthetic tradition that has always been intimately connected with the major trends and cultural innovations of its time".[30] Austin helps place graffiti writing within the context of cultural innovation specifically to black and brown youth in inner-cities.

John D. H. Downing's *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements* discusses graffiti as a form of resistance, as he explores different media as forms of communication within social movements. Downing discusses graffiti has a counter hegemonic dimension, given its context as a reaction to totalitarian state violence. The authors claim that graffiti functions as a way to stage a radical conversation accessible to wider publics, and in that

[28] Usually shortened and called piece or pieces
[29]Tricia, Rose. Black Noise
[30]Joe Austin. Taking the Train 38-39

way helps to constitute an alternative public realm. Graffiti functions as a way to stage a radical conversation accessible to wider publics.[31]

Although extensive films and literature connect graffiti and graffiti culture with Hip-hop and thus afro-diasporic communities mainly Black and non-Black Puerto Rican youth, many early graffiti scholars hesitate to place graffiti within Hip-Hop culture. Gregory J. Snyder author of *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Undergroun*d claims that earlier seminal graffiti texts such as Normal Mailer's *Faith of Graffiti written in 1974*, Craig Castleman's *Getting Up* written in 1982 nor Cooper and Chalfant's *Subway Art* written in 1984 connect graffiti writing to Hip-hop. Authors such as Snyder use personal interviews to derail graffiti culture away from Hip-Hop and claim that graffiti writers also listen to punk and hardcore. The argument that graffiti was not an element of Hip-hop culture divorces graffiti from a tradition of black radical politics due to Hip-Hop culture being an essential part of the black radical tradition. My project specifically locates graffiti writing onto a Black radical tradition of protest.

Gentrification

Gentrification was first coined by British sociologist Ruth Glass (1989) in efforts to describe changes in the social structure and housing market of inner London. She writes,
One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower…Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed.[32]

[31] John D. H, Downing's Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movement 123
[32] Ruth, Glass. Introduction to London: aspects of change. Centre for Urban Studies, London (reprinted in GLASS, R. (1989) Cliché's of Urban Doom, pp. 132–158. Oxford: Blackwell). xviii

Ruth Glass's use of "gentry" was used to signify the emergence of a new "urban gentry." Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly write that gentrification was meant to make fun of the "snobbish pretensions of affluent middle-class households who would still prefer a rural, traditional way of life if given the chance."[33] Scholars have theorized about how and why gentrification begins to reflect? the global political economy. The definition of gentrification has significantly fluctuated throughout time to include various factors.

Neil Smith contends gentrification is a reinvestment of capital into the urban center of a city. This reinvestment in turn is designed to produce space for the upper/middle class while displacing community members.[34] Damaris Rose, argues that gentrification first emerged as a "'temporary and small-scale' departure in what is seen as a 'natural and dominant' process of migration of people from inner cities."[35] Lees, Slater and Wyly, suggest gentrification represents the leading edge of neoliberal urbanism, but also has global impacts and is intertwined with processes of globalization. Theories about gentrification have attributed the phenomenon to the change in middle-class preferences to living in the city. Other scholars suggest the demand for gentrification is caused by the role of political economies of major cities and large social and cultural shifts that create a gentrifying class which prefers cities over suburbs. Scholar Christina Hanhardt discuss gentrification pushed by "marginal gentrifiers" who can be LGBTQ or persons of color but nevertheless contain social and financial capital that can access spaces easier than working class people of color.[36]

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[33] Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly. *Gentrification.* Taylor & Francis Group. 2008. 5

[34]Neil, Smith. "Gentrification" in R.J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt, and M. Watts (eds.) The Dictionary of Human Geography 4th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell) 2000. 294-296.

[35] Damaris, Rose. "Rethinking gentrification: Beyond the uneven development of Marxist urban theory", Environment and Planning D: Society and Space. (1984)

[36] Christina Hanhardt. *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2013.

Current scholars have begun to implement more intersectional approaches to their definitions of gentrification such as Kyeyoung Park and Jessica Kim's article "The Contested Nexus of Los Angeles Koreatown: Capital Restructuring, Gentrification and Displacement," which takes seriously the intersection of race, class and immigration status in their analysis of displacement and gentrification.[37] Park and Kim define gentrification as, "the process in which low-income, often immigrant community residents are displaced from a neighborhood by rising costs due to an influx of wealthier, often white middle class professionals".[38] This contemporary definition of gentrification focuses on the realities that a city such as Los Angeles experiences as a place for immigrants from all over Latin America.

For my project, definitions of gentrification must include intersectionality to be able to situate gentrification in tandem with structures of policing, including through gang injunctions and quality of life law and order interventions, that disproportionately impact immigrant and low-income communities of color. Wyly and Hammel contribute to the definition of gentrification by including the active role it plays in introducing new structures, reallocating neighborhood public services and realigning police practices and public space regulation in favor of middle-class market demand.[39] Furthermore, Christina Hanhardt calls gentrification one of two global capital "spatial fixes", the other being mass incarceration. She writes, "these are processes that have involved the containment and exclusion of the racialized poor: in neighborhoods marked for cycles of disinvestment and then selective reinvestment."[40] Caitlin Cahill's "Negotiating grit and glamour: Young women of color and the gentrification of the Lower East Side" has also been influential into thinking about the cultural changes that

[37] Kyeyoung Park and Jessica, Kim. "The Contests Nexus of Los Angeles Koreatown: Capital Restructuring, Gentrification, and Displacement". *Amerasia Journal* 34:3 (2008) 142
[38] Ibid.
[39] Wyly, E. and D. Hammel Gentrification, segregation and discrimination in the American urban system', Environment and Planning A 36, 7: 1215-1241
[40] Christina, Hanhardt. 14

neighborhoods undergo when they begin to experience gentrification.[41] For this project I am building upon the previous definitions of gentrification by calling upon this process as inherently neocolonial, in which it physically displaces former long-time residents of a neighborhood and culturally displaces form and informal community resources and networks.

Gender Performance and the Ghosts of Coloniality

In "Whatcha Gonna Do?: Revisiting 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book'", Hortense Spillers talks about her groundbreaking article, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book".? Spillers states, "part of the power of the essay is really about mobilizing black feminism and postcolonialism to do the work of interrogating the writing of the human"[42]. Spillers begins an important conversation about gender in relation to black communities in her piece. Spiller's canonized piece, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" argues against the Moynihan report in original and creative ways that do not exclude the most marginalized for the sake of respectability. Spillers works to refute the pathologizing Moynihan Report, by arguing that the Transatlantic slave trade robbed Black people of gender and humanness in general. Enslaved Africans in the Transatlantic slave trade were treated as cargo and were not differentiated by gender nor age when it came to the brutality they faced.

Spillers theorizes around the differences between body and flesh. Bodies have the ability to one day achieve humanness while the flesh is the site of brutality and horror because it lacks humanness. She uses Olaudah Equiano's account describes a "loss of communication" on the native's part and a "control of communication" by the whites as they decide to name the bodies

[41]Caitlin, Cahilll. "Negotiating grit and glamour: Young women of color and the gentrification of the Lower East Side". City & Society. 19;2. 2007

[42]Hortense, Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Shelly Eversley, and Jennifer L. Morgan. ""Whatcha Gonna Do?": Revisiting "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book": A Conversation with Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Shelly Eversley, & Jennifer L. Morgan." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1/2 (2007): 299-309. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27649677.

whatever they wish. She links the "loss of indigenous name/land" as a "metaphor of displacement […] including the displacement of the genitalia, the female and the male's desire that engenders future". Spillers argues that gender binaries were never meant to include blackness within them because Black flesh was not considered human, therefore the extreme policing of gender comportment and sexuality will always be in vain. Spillers introduces the potentiality of existing outside of gender binaries for Black people.

Marcia Ochoa similarly thinks about processes of gendering and heteronormativity toward indigenous people of what was called Tierra Firme, contemporary Venezuela. She writes that she is "trying to articulate the continuities between contemporary queer/trans life worlds in Caracas and other parts of Latin American and colonial forms of governmentality that reverberate in the extended present ".[43] By connected colonial legacies of gendering processes, Ochoa uses what she calls a time travel methodology. Ochoa does this by looking at descriptions of "sexual alterity" in early conquest manuscripts. She argues that this begins in a *hueco negro* or a black hole, as she articulates that two sites although in vastly different times, intimately inform one another. She describes the potentiality of *hueco negro* by describing that she wants it to "to account for the un-knowing, the erasing and consuming of lives, history, memory, landscapes. The continued pull of this force as we find ourselves at the event horizon, being stretched out infinitely while the matter that constitutes us slowly redshifts into absorption, appearing strangely frozen in time from outside the black hole". She argues that her essay is an attempt to account for the gravitational pull of modernity and all the violent processes it enacts on bodies that do not fit into normative rendition of gender and sexuality.

[43] Marcia, Ochoa. "Los Huecos Negros: Cannibalism, Sodomy and the Failure of Modernity in Tierra Firme." | Genders | University of Colorado Boulder. 2016.

Quarequa native people were subject to brutal violence at the hands of Spaniard colonizers for being deemed, sodomites.[44] Ochoa, looks at 1594 emblematic image published by Theodor deBry found in Americae Pars Qvarta. The image depicts fierce dogs attacking and devouring forty to fifty people of Quarequa for being described as being "dressed as women" while Balboa and his conquistadors pose and look from above. This imagery amongst many other historical accounts depict the ways that indigenous people all over the Americas were subject to violent regimes of gender policing.

Both Ochoa and Spillers make arguments towards thinking about contemporary gender violence enacted on what are considered deviant subjects. Historical legacies of enslavement and colonialism inform out contemporary *hueco negro* as we think about the violence that Black and brown people face at the hands of the state for deviating against a heteronormative and homonormative subject. Black genders and sexualities have long been scrutinized for not fitting into white upper/middle-class standards of gender comportment. Cathy Cohen discusses hegemonic standards of gender and sexuality in her germinal pieces "Punk, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens" and "Deviance as Resistance". Cohen's work challenges Black Studies and Queer Studies scholars to think about racialized sexuality seriously by thinking beyond the heterosexual/queer binary. Cohen argues that queers who exclude all heterosexuals ignore the different positions of power race provides to deviant sexualities. Cohen provides the example of the welfare queen who is racialized as a Black mother, considered hypersexual. Her proximity to power compared to a white gay man's is further and more scrutinized. Cohen discusses the constant surveillance of the state on the body of the welfare queen and challenges queer organizing but more specifically queer theory to reconceptualize the divide between straight and

[44] Quarequa is the indigenous peoples of what is now so-called Panama

non-straight. I think Cohen provides the central framework from where we can then conceptualize homonormativity.[45]

Cohen, Spillers, and Ochoa all allow me to think about how gender is inscribed onto brown bodies by the state. Along with forcing the construct of gender onto communities, colonial legacies of violence inform the way society expects gender comportment. This process of policing gender comportment and performance will always be violent to operationalize on racialized bodies that did not exist in harmony with these categories. Inspired by Evelyn Hammonds, Ochoa argues that we must think about colonial legacies when we think about issues within Latinx gender and sexualities. Hammonds writes, "Rather than assuming that black female sexualities are structured along an axis of normal and perverse paralleling that of white women, we might find that for black women a different geometry operates." Hammonds urges Black feminist thinkers and scholars to think of a different geometry than that of white women and white lesbians because of the silences around black lesbians.

Black feminist theorists along with hemispheric queer theorists urge me to come up with different grammar and geometry towards thinking about the way brown bodies are policed toward fitting hegemonic masculinity and femininity. How can we then think about spatiality and the construction of space as participating or at least complicit to the violence of gendering? I am interested in bringing to this conversation scholars such as Katherine McKittrick and LaKisha Simmons towards thinking about Black feminist geographers and their theorizing of space as always inherently violent toward Black women and girls.

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[45] Cathy J. Cohen. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics," *GLQ* 3 (1997): 437-65.
Cathy J Cohen. "Deviance as resistance: A new research agenda for the study of black politics." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1, no. 1 (2004): 27-45.

Theorizing Space and Race

Neely and Samura, authors of "Social Geographies of Race: Connecting Race and Space" demonstrate a framework which illuminates social constructions of space and race in a "post-racial" era.[46] Authors Neely and Samura draw from both Jennifer Nelson's discussions on the processes of colonialism and imperialism as marking racially inferior groups which in turn have been confined and eradicated through the control of space.[47] Additionally, they draw from, Doreen Massey and her discussion on how global patriarchy and racism create an environment in which some bodies are able to move freely while others are forced to stay or be displaced. Grounding colonialism as a tool to racialize, gender and class space is a layering process where historical legacies continue to inform current processes of displacement.

Neely and Samura present space as contested, fluid yet historical, relational and interactional and containing both difference and inequality. Contested spaces as "geographic locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power".[48] The meanings of space uncover who does and does not have the power to define and control the contested space. Utilizing a spatial framework, we are able to clearly uncover gentrification as a tool of racial capitalism in efforts to maintain class order and white supremacy.

Caroline Knowles' analysis of space as an active archive discusses the social constructions and history that intersect in space. She discusses space as an active archive which holds social processes and relationships with hierarchies of race. Knowles argues that space is an active archive because space is interactive and not just in a racial past or present but actively. Knowles

[46]Neely, Brooke & Michelle Samura. "Social geographies of race: connecting race and space". Ethnic and Racial Studies, 34:11, (2011)
[47] Jennifer, Nelson. *Razing Africville: A Geography of Racism*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press (2008)
[48] Low and Lawrence-Zuniga qtd. Brooke Neely & Michelle Samura. "Social geographies of race: connecting race and space". Ethnic and Racial Studies, 34:11, (2011)

discusses four ways in which racial and spatial processes intersect: 1) contestations over built environment; 2) the everyday embodied and performed social lives of people; 3) the movement, placement and displacement of people; 4) social relationships within individuals and groups. For the purposes of this research project I am most interested in the everyday embodied and performed lives of people and how they intersect with power.[49]

Crescent City Girls; The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans by LaKisha Simmons utilizing creative archiving to piece together the lives of young Black girls in New Orleans during the Jim Crow era. Simmons highlights the geographic navigational practices of young Black girls as they face segregation, street harassment, and general violence. Simmons argues that young Black girls create mental maps that may not reflect actual technical maps but in fact represent "children's own experiences, their cognitive development and their growing sense of the world around them".[50] Black girls' cartographic practices allowed them to understand themselves and their racialized city. Black girls were subject to white rage and violence and thus based on archives, Simmons argues that white kids did not have to create the same mental maps because they did not think about urban space the way Black girls did. Most, if not all of the violence enacted onto Black girls was from white people, included white kids hurling rocks at them. LaKisha Simmons conversations around mental maps are useful to think about the different navigational strategies that racialized and gendered bodies learn and practice in order to survive the racist landscape.

Katherine McKittrick's work in *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* bridges Black Feminist theory and critical geography. McKittrick traces the stories of

[49] Carolina Knowles qtd. Brooke Neely & Michelle Samura. "Social geographies of race: connecting race and space". Ethnic and Racial Studies, 34:11, (2011) 1940
[50] LaKisha, Simmons. *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans*. UNC Press Books, 2015. 11

Black women and how they contain in them meaningful geographic tenants that are often reduced to "seeable flesh and unseeable geographic knowledges." She uses textual evidence from Linda Brent's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and Marlene Nourbese Phillip's poem "Dis Place--The Space Between" to think about geographies in relation to black Women's intimate spaces of retreat. Phillip's poem connects material geographies, "such as the plantation, the nation, public streets, and legal borders to poetic geography of black femininity in order to show that scale of the body, for black women, is both illustrative of public racial-sexual disavowal and location of politicization".[51] McKittrick's powerful contribution is thinking about the everlasting geographic racist-sexist schemas that continue to be recycled. She uncovers how Black women's creative mappings such as the garret from Brent's book and the space between the legs from Phillip's poem, are two sites in which these mappings are hidden yet exposed, private yet unprotected from public use and abuse. Black feminism contributes to geography through thinking about how black women have been relegated to the margins of knowledge and have been imagined as outside of the production of space.

These works provide my project with important foundations towards thinking about racialized and gendered space. Black Feminist geography has radicalized the field of critical space studies and intervened by creating literature about racialized, sexualized and gendered bodies navigating landscapes. This genealogy of literature has largely influenced how I can conceptualize my project to be grounded in Black feminist theory. I utilize this literature to further push my understanding of layered geographies. Along with the literature on mental mapping and LaKisha Simmons brings the idea of the living body as a unified idea of a physical body acting and experiencing in a specific sociocultural context, a body-in-situation. Similarly,

[51] Katherine, McKittrick. *Demonic Grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle.* U of Minnesota Press, 2006. Pg. 45

Katherine McKittrick idea of bodymemory; a corporeal continuity which moves through time and recognizes where "permanent racial-sexual time-spaces appear in dominant texts". Mental Mapping and bodymemory push me to theorize layered geographies as not only something that has to do with the legacy of land memory and the various processes of dispossession but also the various navigational practices instilled by marginalized peoples as they navigate contentious spaces such as Echo Park, Los Angeles.

Layered Geographies

Building on critical geographers who have conceptualized strategies of survival and navigation, I conceptualize *layered geographies* as a tool that takes into account racial scripts that we see interact in space throughout time.[52] My intervention of a raced and spaced analytic attempt to make sense of a displacement that is both physical and cultural while taking into account navigational decisions on behalf of bodies of color. I intend to use layering geographies as a theoretical framework that looks at how sites such as Echo Park enable alternative cartographies for those that have been excluded from Echo Park as a white space. Layered geographies can exist in multiple spaces and take into consideration the different navigational practices that brown bodies take as precaution to conditions of extreme policing and other forms of violence. The concept of layered geographies also illuminates the social role of white bodies that gentrification privileges and how their navigational practices and movements are drastically different from those of indigenous residents and not contained by racialized and classed boundaries.

Layered geographies works to consider the historical processes of walkways, streets, allies, and other spaces where people traverse. By thinking about the historical processes of

[52] Natalia, Molina. *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, citizenship and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*. University of California Press. 2014

dispossession and displacement of marginalized communities in Echo Park starting with native Tongva people, I can ground this project in a settler state. If the backdrop for gentrification is colonialism how can we conceptualize differed policing practices from the state as regurgitations of colonial violence. I operationalize layered geographies to disrupt notions of singularity of movement in space by arguing that movements are connected and inform each other.

Huecos Negros: A Time Travel Methodology

This paper will contextualize the state of Echo Park as a site where historical dispossessions and contemporary displacements occur due to gentrification. Marcia Ochoa's time travel as a historical methodology allows a time travelling analysis between early contact texts and contemporary moments. Ochoa calls it jumping from one hueco negro (black hole) to another as she employs quantum physics to be able to travel back and forth as well as exist simultaneously in realms that influence one another. Ochoa discusses huecos negros within Black Feminist theoretical contributions by Kimberly Crenshaw and Evelyn Hammonds. Ochoa argues that huecos negros employs time while theorizing the intersectionalities of issues and historical events. [53] Ochoa's historical methodology of time travel is useful for this project as I think about different sites of ongoing dispossession. I relate the events of displacement and dispossession in a nonlinear way because although the events are not occurring within the same decade they are occurring within the same landscape following the haunting of Chavez Ravine.

Affective Economy of White Pleasure

I utilize Sara Ahmed's notion of affective economies to theorize the way white pleasure is weaponized against Brown communities specifically in Echo Park.[54] I argue that gentrification

[53] Marcia, Ochoa. "Los Huecos Negros: Cannibalism, Sodomy and the Failure of Modernity in Tierra Firme". Genders. University of Colorado Boulder. 2016.
[54] Sara, Ahmed. *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge, 2013.

as a process is enabled by affective economies of white pleasure. Paula Ioanide, author of *The Emotional Politics of Racism* operationalizes Ahmed's work and writes, "emotions function like economies; they have mechanisms of circulation, accumulation, expression and exchange that give them social currency, cultural legibility and political power".[55] I examine affective economies of white pleasure in Chavez Ravine, as communities of Mexicans and Mexican Americans are displaced and deprioritized for the sake of baseball, a racialized white "American" past time. In addition, I argue that the affective economies of white pleasure pushed the gang injunctions to be put into place to protect Echo Park Lake as a site for day tourism. I define white pleasure as an affective economy and a constellation of activities, appropriations, and leisure that whiteness offers to those closely aligned. White pleasure can be enjoyed and participated in by more than white people but by those in approximation to whiteness both as a class and race. Gentrification must be understood in an intersectional way where gentrifiers are not just white or upper/middle class but also people with marginalized identities with vast amounts of social capital that make a body more desirable for a neighborhood.

Policing Space

Gang injunctions establish "safety zones" in which daily interactions and types of dress can violate the injunction's terms and be met with a fine or an augmented sentence if a person is prosecuted for a crime. Official court documents state that those targeted can only be charged with violating a civil gang injunction if they are within the space of jurisdiction of the injunction, otherwise known as a "safety zone". Safety zones are codified as areas "protected" by a gang injunction.

[55] Paula, Ioanide. *The Emotional Politics of Racism: How Feelings Trump Facts in an Era of Colorblindness*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015. 2.

If a community member is undocumented their punishment can potentially lead to deportation. Criminology scholar Ana Muñiz frames gang injunctions within a legacy of anti-black *de jure* containment.[56] The legacy of anti-black legislation is foundational to the continuation of racist legislation such as gang injunctions. The very first gang injunction targeted a working class Black neighborhood, Cadillac-Corning in West Los Angeles. Scholars have linked gang injunctions with other carceral extensions such as Black codes.[57] Gang injunctions can be understood as extensions of the carceral regime that seeks to confine and limit the mobility of youth of color.[58] Gang injunction scholars argue that these restrictions impose racial and classed boundaries of color. I intersectionally argue that gang injunctions place gendered boundaries based on how they simultaneously discipline, surveille and police gender, race, and class.

Gang injunctions are enacted upon individuals who are considered gang members or otherwise part of the gang group being targeted. CalGang is a database used to determine who should be considered a gang member based on suspicions and claims made by patrol officers. The California gang database began as a collection of private information that the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and the LAPD compiled during the creation of the first gang injunction against the Playboy Gangster Crips (PBG) in 1987. The illegal and unethical methods that LAPD took in compiling private information on Black men suspected of being part of a gang included stalking and observing neighborhoods at all hours of the day. The earliest stages of this database was a binder which catalogued people that the city attorney could identify as PBG members. CalGang has evolved into an electronic database of statewide gang related intelligence.

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[56] Ana Muñiz.

[57] Stewart, Gary. "Black Codes and Broken Windows: The Legacy of Racial Hegemony in Anti-Gang Civil Injunctions". *The Yale Law Journal.* 107 (7). 1998

[58] Ana Muñiz.

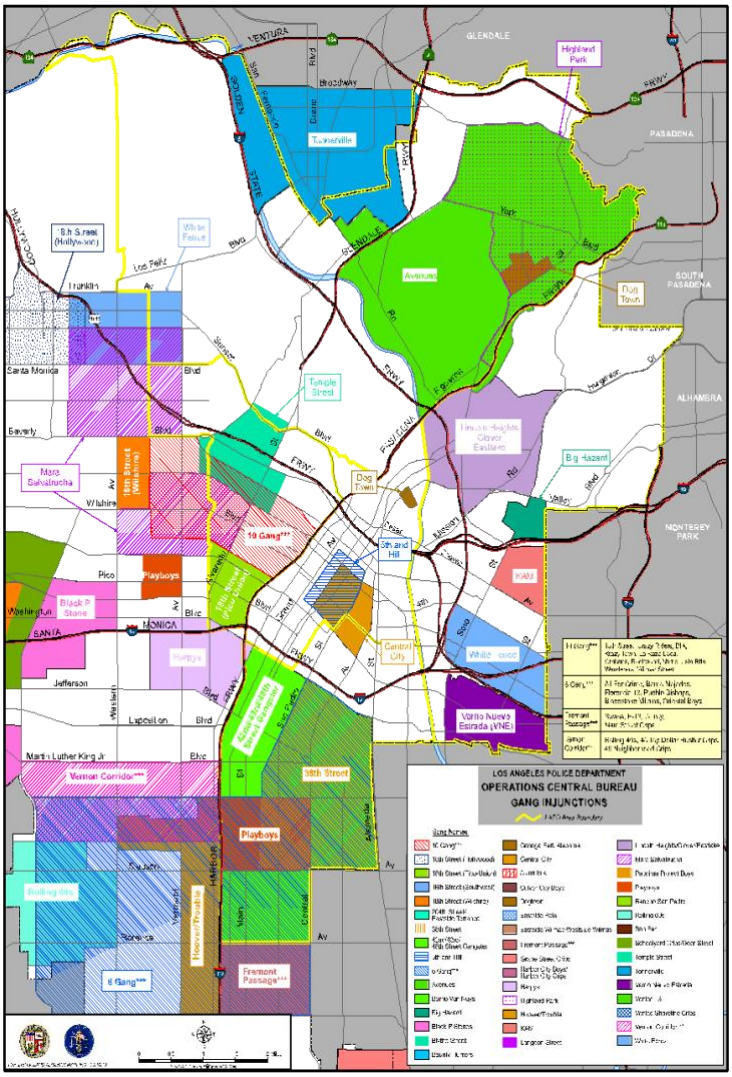
Positioning gang injunctions as part of a broader network of carceral technologies helps unpack the various ways in which the U.S. cities function as part or extensions of carceral state. Rashad Shabazz's groundbreaking work *Spatializing Blackness: Architecture of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago* describe spatialized blackness as policing, surveillance, and architectures of confinement that highlights how, "mechanisms of constraint built into architecture, urban planning, and systems of control that functioned through policing and the establishment of borders literally and figuratively created a prison like environment".[59] Gang injunctions as a mechanism of urban planning are originally created to spatialize blackness but are extended to police and confine brown bodies in Echo Park.

The groups targeted with the Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction are Big Top Locos, Crazys, Diamond Street Locos, Echo Park Locos, Frogtown Rifa and HeadHunters. The targeted groups are also prohibited from association in common areas which bans them from standing, walking, sitting or appearing with anyone else suspected of being in a gang. In the areas surrounding Echo Park there are over three overlapping gang injunctions in place including the Temple Street gang injunction, Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction and the 18th Street gang injunction.

The state refers to the defendants in the gang injunction within larger groups, there are no specific names listed in this document; those included as defendants and served with a gang injunction are perceived to be in association with the gangs listed. In the map below, the Glendale Corridor gang injunction is not pictured but would be placed right next to and above the Temple Street gang injunction. Many activists including the Youth Justice Center based in Inglewood, have conducted research on what the potentiality of gang injunctions can be in the

[59] Rashad, Shabazz. *Spatializing Blackness: Architecture of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago.* University of Illinois Press. 2015. 2.

context of criminalizing bodies of color. Gang injunctions further criminalize community members and increase police presence. The increase of police presence makes undocumented community members especially vulnerable to arrest and deportation, a policy that does nothing to increase public safety, but in fact diverts resources away from it.[60]



(Image 2. Map of gang injunctions around Echo Park

http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/gang_injun_OCB_85x11.pdf)

[60] Ana Muñiz. and Kim McGill. "Tracked and Trapped". Youth Justice Coalition. 2012

Image 2 is a map included in the Los Angeles Police Department website. It is not interactive, not updated, and the legend is very confusing. These shortcomings of the gang injunction map make it particularly difficult for those affected under gang injunctions to navigate the city and their neighborhoods without risk of being stopped by police. There are several gang injunctions that are overlapping, whilst very little white space left within the map and it is daunting to think about how each body must act once it crosses to the next boundary.

Recent audits show several problematic inconsistencies with CalGang Database. According to research conducted by the Youth Justice Coalition, CalGang places too much liberty on police officers to decide if someone should be recorded in the database as a gang member.[61] This study of Echo Park centers the history of gang injunctions in Los Angeles because they were the starting point for the creation of new policing tactics for the entire world. The creation of the first gang injunction in the neighborhood of Cadillac Corning, which is spatially a border community between working class Black neighborhood and a middle class white neighborhood illustrates the importance of police surveillance and differential charging and sentencing in the creation of spatial boundaries.

During August 2016, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee of the California legislature presented an audit report addressing the requirements to add juveniles to the CalGang database. The audit report questions the overseeing entity of the CalGang database as there appears to be no regulation on the infringement of privacy rights. The audit lists other objections, such as failure to comply with requirements that protect individuals' rights to privacy and lack of evidence that law enforcement had to establish reasonable suspicion to label groups as gangs. This audit report emphasizes the arbitrary nature of CalGang and reiterates the danger that gang

[61] Ana Muñiz. and Kim McGill. "Tracked and Trapped". Youth Justice Coalition. 2012

injunctions pose because they leave authority in the hands of police officers who can criminalize and increase sentencing with no institutional due process such as a court hearing or trial.

The CalGang database and the gang injunctions it authorizes and enables have been instrumental in criminalizing and implementing racially classed and gendered boundaries throughout Echo Park. Gang injunctions are utilized to criminalize people labeled as gang members, but also simultaneously target houseless inhabitants on skid row[62], graffiti crews and activists protesting injustice.

Once entered into the database and convicted for a felony, incarcerated people serve increased sentences due to their status in the database. There is yet to be any challenge to these increased sentences for incarcerated people, even though their inclusion in the database is questionable on due process grounds. On March 15, 2018, a Los Angeles court judge blocked the police from enforcing most of the remaining gang injunctions issued before January 19, 2018. This decision was a huge victory for both the ACLU and the Youth Justice Coalition jointly filed a lawsuit against the city claiming that gang injunctions violated the constitutional rights of those subject to the injunctions. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was pushed to modify its policies on gang injunctions and now must provide defendants thirty days to challenge their inclusion in a gang injunction. Although this recent ruling is historic, injunctions are continue to police spatial boundaries and racialized bodies by continuing to enforce recently passed gang injunctions.[63]

[62] A homeless community in downtown Los Angeles

[63] Queally, James. "Los Angeles Barred from Enforcing Nearly All Gang Injunctions, Federal Judge Rules." Los Angeles Times. March 15, 2018. Accessed May 24, 2019. https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-gang-injunction-court-order-20180315-story.html.

Hueco Negro: Chavez Ravine

Huecos Negros for this project serve as moments across space and time that I can connect together to understand and contextualize the present moment of gentrification in Echo Park. For example, embedded in the history of Echo Park is the infamous displacement and demolition of the communities that resided in Chavez Ravine. Echo Park carries a legacy of displacement and dispossession of brown bodies since its inception. The infamous removal of the predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American community of Chavez Ravine occurred in the 1950s to clear ground for Dodger Stadium. Initially, the city cleared the 352-acre site to make way for a public housing project. The project was scrapped due to the anti-communist red scare and its assumed proximity to communist legislation. The planned public housing project for low income residents was never built in the community nor anywhere else. City officials argued that baseball was the more American alternative to public housing.[64] The land including the oil rights was given to Walter O'Malley, the owner of the then Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team as an incentive to move the team to Los Angeles.[65] "Urban renewal hastened the racial and spatial polarization of postwar Southern California," writes Chicano Studies scholar Eric Avila, "and the imposition of Dodger Stadium upon a working-class Chicano community nourished the regional development of a racialized political culture."[66] Avila contextualizes the move by the Dodgers to Los Angeles as part of a larger social, economic and technological changes that transformed the city's culture. During the 1950's, city officials of Los Angeles remained determined to modernize the image of the city. They depended upon the displacement of

[64] Eric Avila. *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles.* University of California Press. 2004

[65] Eric, Avila. *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles.* University of California Press. 2004

[66] Eric, Avila. *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles.* University of California Press. 2004 p. 9

working class communities of color such as in Chavez Ravine and Bunker Hill in downtown Los Angeles.

Aurora Vargas: Patron Saint of Displacement

The Arechiga family, comprised of Manuel and Avrana Arechiga had first settled into Chavez Ravine during the 1920's were the last family to be displaced. The Arechiga's evaded the first round of evictions of 1952 and were violently forced out of their homes by county sheriff's on May 8th 1959. The most notable image of the forceful eviction is that of Aurora Vargas, a daughter of the Arechigas.[67] This image has been so influential in popular culture it has been widely used to rally against gentrification. Image 3 shows the repurposing of the iconic image of Aurora Vargas used as a button for Puentes y Fuentes, a radio show based in Boyle Heights. Representations of Aurora Vargas have heralded her as an early active protestor to forces of displacement and development. However, most texts do not specify her name and clump her into the Arechigas.

[67] Scott, Harrison. "From the Archives: 1959 Evictions from Chavez Ravine." Los Angeles Times. May 09, 2017.

(Image 3. Screenshot of advertisement for a radio show Puentes y Fuentes)

Aurora Vargas appears in Brando Skyhorse's *The Madonnas of Echo Park*, where her name is changed to Aurora Salazar in the chapter "La Luz y La Tierra." Skyhorse's 2010 novel focuses on the lives of Mexican and Latinxs Angelinos in Echo Park as they navigate a changing neighborhood. He writes, "It took more than God's hands to move Aurora Salazar. Four pairs of hands, to be exact, carried Aurora by her wrists and ankles out of her house in front of news reporters and photographers, down a flight of stairs... "[68] Aurora is canonized in *The Madonnas of Echo Park* as a fierce and strong community presence. The person narrating the chapter "La Luz y La Tierra" is named after Aurora. The character throughout the book finds herself displaced as she tries to leave Echo Park and comes back only to find a completely different neighborhood

[68] Brandon, Skyhorse. *The Madonnas of Echo Park*. Free Press. P. 151 2010

with different people and culture. Aurora Vargas' image has become iconic in the current anti-gentrification activist movement. Her fierce usage of her body as protest can be mapped onto an archive of embodied refusal as she is carried away and incarcerated. In a follow up article by the *Los Angeles Times*, she is quoted saying, "Actually I had a nervous breakdown after it happened, and I spent 30 days in jail". Aurora Vargas affective response to displacement can be seen in Image 4 as she sits behind a patrol car.

(Image 4. Aurora Vargas and Mrs. Walters sit behind a county sheriff's car)

Images of the displacement of Aurora Vargas was televised and as a result a number of people wrote to Los Angeles City Councilman Edward Roybal in support of the Arechigas. Most of the mail in support of the family used American exceptionalism and ideals of private ownership to justify the Arechigas protest. Some compared the housing struggle to violent regimes enacted on Black people in Jim Crow era and ultimately used anti-blackness to justify better treatment for Mexicans. Claiming, "The people of Mexican descent are being treated

worse than the c*lored!"[69] The evictions also aroused anti-Mexican racist sentiments by some letter writers, critiquing Aurora Vargas' strategy of passive resistance and justifying force used against her.

Sites of Deviance

Avila maps both the communities of Chavez Ravine and Bunker Hill were racialized as "pachuco zones" due to the aftermath of the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943. Pachuco zones was dog whistle politics for "poverty and pathology" that were seen to repel the city's middle class. Displacement of the communities of Chavez Ravine were only successful because of the criminalization of Brown families and youth that made these neighborhoods their home. The intimate ties between space and identity must be taken into consideration when discussing gentrification and urban renewal.

The Echo Park Historical Society (EPHS) website provides an interesting site to look at attitudes of Latinx community members of Echo Park by those who claim to preserve the history of this neighborhood. EPHS has a section where one can explore the different histories of Echo Park monuments. It is one of the few sources to excavate any history on Echo Park. EPHS's website states that the middle of the 20th century initiated a period of "decline" for Echo Park and blames lack of police presence provided by the city.[70] EPHS further discusses the park in Echo Park itself a "victim of urban neglect."[71] EPHS ends their brief history of Echo Park Lake with a note that the park itself needs help to cope with "various urban ills," but is hopeful for the new prospects of the neighborhood.[72]

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[69] Eric, Avila. *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight* 169.
[70] "Echo Park Lake." Echo Park Historical Society. 2005. Accessed January 28, 2019. http://historicechopark.org/history-landmarks/places-landmarks/echo-park-lake/.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

A 1971 *Los Angeles Times* (*LA Times*) article titled "Which Way for Echo Park---Inner Oasis or Slum?" written by Dial Torgerson is an article that was referred to in Echo Park Historical Society's brief history on Echo Park Lake. The writers of the brief history describe the *LA Times* article as encapsulating the mood of Echo Park in the 1970s. In the *LA Times* article, Torgerson describes Echo Park as "hilly, multi-racial, multi-ethnic home of both the poor and better off".[73] Torgerson uses language that pathologizes Latinx but specifically Mexican immigrants and Chicanx communities. A UCLA study for the city's new general plan cited in Torgerson's article, urges readers of the dangers of Latinx immigrants that can quickly turn Echo Park into a Mexican-American barrio. The study writes, "We strongly urge that via the process of community organizations and related efforts, steps be taken to avoid further ghettoization". In addition to the inclusion of this UCLA study, Torgerson continues his profile of the neighborhood with descriptions of youth gangs, graffiti and "Viva la Raza" tags written on homes. He includes an anecdote of a nameless mother, "One mother enrolled eight children in school. She didn't speak English, and her oldest boy had to do the best he could to translate for her. There was no father. They came from Temple St."[74] The Los Angeles Times article demonstrates wider attitudes held in the U.S. by whites against communities of color such as the discourses that pathologized Black families and framed matriarchs as welfare queens.[75]

The historical displacement of Chavez Ravine provides a backdrop for the ongoing prioritization of white pleasure over Brown survival in Los Angeles. It is important to distinguish that although Chavez Ravine was not originally demolished to make way for Dodger Stadium but for a public housing project. The immediate impact of the Arechigas and Aurora Vargas forceful eviction were directly caused by the eagerness to start the Dodger Stadium

[73] Dial, Torgerson. "Which What for Echo Park---Inner Oasis or Slum?" *Los Angeles Times*. Sep 19 1971
[74] Dial, Torgerson.
[75] Patricia Hill Collins. *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge, 2002.

project. Baseball and the stadium itself can be seen as a catalyst for urban renewal and development in the area of Chavez Ravine. Chavez Ravine begins a contemporary history of displacement of brown people for the sake of the affective economy of white pleasure. I begin with this moment because of the "haunting" that this occurrence brings into Echo Park, a neighborhood walking distance from Dodger Stadium.

Hueco Negro: The Belmont Tunnel Pelota Tarasceros and Taggers

What may seem as a sudden jump through time and space actually can be seen within the legacy of the consequences of an affective economy of white pleasure. For the second hueco negro, I focus on the demolition of the Belmont Tunnel in the community of Echo Park. A tool that has been used by agents for gentrification is artwashing, which refers to "the kinds of marketing and political strategies that make use of art and artists to raise the price of real estate".[76] Artwashing has been used in communities such as Echo Park and Little Tokyo to frame gentrification as bringing culture to neighborhoods previously deemed undesirable. The Belmont Tunnel was seen as the mecca of graffiti culture in the west coast yet was demolished without a second thought for luxury apartments.

[76] Magally, Miranda. and Kyle Lane-McKinley. "Artwashing, or, Between Social Practice and Social Reproduction." A Blade of Grass, www.abladeofgrass.org/fertile-ground/artwashing-social-practice-social-reproduction/.

(Image 5. Belmont Tunnel before and after. http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-entrance-to-the-belmont-tunnel-a-haven-for-graffiti-news-photo/539930896#the-entrance-to-the-belmont-tunnel-a-haven-for-graffiti-artists-for-picture-id539930896)

The Belmont Tunnel officially known as Toluca Substation and Yard, is a historical monument in Los Angeles which formerly housed the Pacific Electric Railway redline in the 1920s. The station was first created in efforts to push commuters to move to suburbs such as Glendale, Burbank and Santa Monica yet still be able to travel to downtown Los Angeles for commerce. The Belmont Tunnel was created in efforts to establish a subway system that connected outlying suburbs to Downtown Los Angeles. The proposed subway system would eliminate traffic that cars experienced and some of the local stops that train rides practiced.

As car ownership in Los Angeles increased, buses began to take over public transportation. The Pacific Electric Railway was bought off by Metropolitan Coach line who sought to convert all rail to bus services (Meares). In 1955, the last ride was given and the subway terminal was closed; the train tracks were taken out of the Belmont Tunnel, and Toluca yard and substation were abandoned. The space was used in a variety of odd ways such as storing rations of crackers for potential bomb attacks during the Cold War and serving as a living space for homeless communities of Los Angeles.

Toluca Yard was also used as a space where residents of Westlake came together to play Pelota Tarasca, a pre-Colombian indigenous ball game that was played throughout Central Mexico reaching to El Salvador. Pelota Tarasca is named after the Tarascan indigenous people and it is still played in Southwestern Mexican states such as Guerrero and Michoacán (Krikorian, 1996). The Toluca Yard more commonly known as the Belmont tunnel became a self-made space for taggers and Pelota Tarasca players alike. Pelota Tarasca players, who were predominantly Mexican immigrants, created a stadium within the Belmont tunnel where they drew audiences from nearby neighborhoods and established a communal diasporic experience of play. The demolition of this yard not only disrupted landscapes of brown play but also interrupted processes of community building.

Along with a stadium the Belmont tunnel also became a well-known graffiti yard where local taggers painted their best pieces. In 1984 the first large scale graffiti piece was painted onto Toluca Yard by a young tagger and Belmont high school student Hector Calderon also known as Shandu. His piece titled "Risko City" paved the way for more taggers to use the Belmont Tunnel as a canvas. *The Los Angeles Times* called the Belmont tunnel the center of West Coast graffiti (Hernandez). Art historians began giving the Belmont Tunnel exposure and began giving their students tours. Local taggers believed that these tours had similar effects to bulldozers because they garnered the tunnel unwanted attention from outsiders of the community.

In 2002 Toluca Yard was bought by the owners of the Meta Housing Corporation who announced plans to build a 276-unit apartment complex, only 57 of which would be considered affordable housing. Neighborhood activists and scholars came together under the name Belmont Art Park United. They resisted and pushed back against Meta Housing Corporation. Activists fought for the Belmont Tunnel to be considered a monument honoring Los Angeles underground graffiti culture. Belmont Art Park United was able to attain historic status for the

tunnel and substation but demands for a graffiti park were denied.[77] The tunnel was eventually filled in, and the graffiti was white washed in an effort to integrate both onto the apartment's aesthetic.

The Belmont tunnel was so ingrained in the urban culture of Los Angeles that was featured in a number of films and video games such as Tony Hawk's American Wasteland. The *Los Angeles Times* constantly referred to this space as a site of urban decay, as an abandoned site. The Belmont Tunnel's transformation evidenced the disinvestment of state and local resources in the neighborhood, but the tunnel itself had been made into a site of creative resistance to the lack of resources given to brown immigrant communities.

Demolition of Belmont Tunnel

In Ryan Masaaki Yokota's short documentary, *The Belmont Tunnel*, the first artifact from the Belmont tunnel that is demolished is an Olmec head painted onto a concrete block. The symbolism of demolishing an Olmec head spray painted on a site where a traditionally indigenous game is played by Mexican immigrants reveals how the tunnel can be viewed as an active archive that contains multiple geographical layers that are raced, classed and marked by the continuation of colonialism. The Belmont Tunnel's demolition destroyed a common space built by poor Latinx youth and men in efforts to create a recreational space where indigenous traditions could be practiced.

Symbolism such as the Olmec head in The Belmont Tunnel also signals a conversation about indigeneity that needs to be discussed within the framework of layered geographies. Conversations around gentrification are always referred to as "the new colonialism" which is

[77] Daniel, Hernandez. "Graffiti Art Park Brushed Aside." Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Times, 16 Sept. 2004, articles.latimes.com/2004/sep/16/local/me-tunnel16.

inherently violent because not only does it erase the realities that we experience from colonialism but it also erases native people's realities. Indigenous people from Latin America have resiliently maintained and practiced traditions in Los Angeles such as the Guelaguetza that is organized by Oaxacan indigenous people among other traditions. The presence of these events has caused institutions to refer to indigenous Latin Americans as "inheritors of the land" while actively ignoring indigenous Tongva people from Los Angeles. These tensions between migrant native people exist and need to be discussed as iconography such as the Olmec head are used to build a pan-indigenous identity while native Tongva people may not identify. What visual violence does this enact to Tongva people?

(Image 6. Olmec head painted onto structure, screenshot of Ryan Masaaki Yokota's documentary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vx3pi39Ck5E)

After the demolition of The Belmont Tunnel and the construction of The Belmont Station Apartments, the 276-unit apartment complex, a small park was built behind the apartment complex. The small park where the Belmont Tunnel was closed is now locked and according to Essex, a website that showcases luxury apartments, it is a designated dog park with

an agility course for residents of The Belmont Station Apartments.[78] Among the private dog park other amenities include a business lounge, fitness center, movie theatre, outdoor barbeque and pool. Meta Housing Corporation pitched fifty-seven units as affordable housing before being approved for construction, however the presence of the apartment building is much more luxurious than the rest of the neighborhood. In her article "Geographies of Displacement" Nancy Mirabal discusses what she calls gentrified consumptions.[79] Mirabal defines gentrified consumptions as businesses, restaurants, bars etc. that are deliberately built to attract wealthier populations to a neighborhood. The Belmont Station Apartments, I argue, are part of gentrified consumptions. This housing complex was built with a specific socioeconomic class of residents in mind that would utilize a business center. The new development that replaced The Belmont Tunnel can be traced as a consequence of that affective economy of white pleasure.

The Belmont Tunnel teaches us that brown communities in fact create spaces where culture and traditions are cultivated yet the state will always prioritize the pleasure of desirable bodies of white middle class people. As a space made by and for Latinx people, The Belmont Tunnel served as a community park and graffiti yard where culture was practiced and exchanged. On March 19, 2016 Obscura Society LA and Cartwheel Art Tours held a tour dedicated to The Belmont Tunnel and Animal Alley.[80] This tour is dedicated to showcasing "the vibrant murals of Animal Alley and the history of street art and graffiti in Echo Park".[81] Ironically, this tour took

[78]"Belmont Station." Essex Apartment Homes. Accessed May 25, 2019. https://www.essexapartmenthomes.com/california/los-angeles-area-apartments/los-angeles-apartments/belmont-station.

[79] Nancy Raquel Mirabal. "Geographies of Displacement: Latina/os, oral history, and the politics of gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District." *The Public Historian* 31, no.2 (2009): 7-31.

[80] Obscura Society is a collective derived from Atlas Obscura, a self-professed "global community of explorers".

[81] Animal Alley is a public art initiative started by Jason Ostro, a gallery owner. He invited 50 artists to paint 75 murals in Echo Park.
Vankin, Deborah. "Animal Alley: The Story behind the Murals Being Painted in Echo Park." Los Angeles Times. December 16, 2015.
"Obscura Society LA & Cartwheel Art Tours: The Belmont Tunnel & Animal Alley." Atlas Obscura. Accessed February 11, 2019. https://www.atlasobscura.com/events/obscura-society-la-cartwheel-art-tours-animal-alley.

tourists to the Belmont Tunnel that was demolished for the purpose of creating a livable place for white middle class people that are expected to take the tour. The Belmont Tunnel and its role in graffiti and indigenous culture has become a relic of the past, something that was inevitably destroyed in the process of urban renewal.

The Belmont Tunnel is a second hueco negro within the time travel methodology that I am using that effectively maps the legacy in Echo Park and the greater Los Angeles area. These earlier events of renewal create a timeline that we can trace to think about how gentrification came to be in Echo Park. The importance of The Belmont Tunnel within this narrative of artwashing is that it is a relic of culture recognized internationally by the graffiti community. The demolition of the site and tour of the development which displaced it is evident that although the space was recognized as a site of culture, white pleasure was prioritized.

Hueco Negro: Gendered Conditions of Criminalization

(Image 7. Tag Aztek Queen on pole in Echo Park Lake.)

The demolition of The Belmont Tunnel is a huge loss for local Echo Park graffiti scene, but as you walk around the park you can still see the spirit of graffiti all around. The tag in Image 5 appears to be a marker on a pole in the park. The tag states "Aztek Queen" with a heart next to Queen. Signifiers such as hearts and flowers in graffiti often symbolize a feminine identity that the writer is trying to establish. As I walk around Echo Park Lake, I see not only a variety of Echo Park Locos tags but also tags with visible signifiers such as hearts. In a park that has been deemed a white space by both popular culture narratives such as films and anti-gentrification organizers these tags say otherwise. In this section I am interested in how Brown people and particularly Brown youth are transgressing boundaries created by gang injunctions and the policing of urban space through graffiti and dress. I look at tags such as Aztek Queen's but also the policing of style politics in gang injunctions that speak to the ways in which racialized gender is central to this story.

Traditional notions of femininity and masculinity have been imposed on communities of color. Cathy Cohen's "Deviance as Resistance," discusses how communities of color have internalized white upper/middle class norms and self-police our own communities.[82] Although white notions of femininity and masculinity are never afforded to non-white Latinxs and Black people, severe consequences occur when racialized people step out of white heteronormative gender performances. Lena Palacios discusses troubling the category of girl and girlhood "as a colonial legacy that privileges white, upper-/middle-class, heterosexual, able bodies via Euro-Western theories of normative child development that were and continue to be violently

[82] Cathy J. Cohen, "Deviance as resistance: A new research agenda for the study of black politics." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1, no. 1 (2004): 27-45.

imposed upon Indigenous and racialized girls."[83] I utilize Palacios notion of the colonial legacy of girlhood to expand on how gang injunctions become another mechanism that polices gender performance on racialized and classed subjects.

Graffiti has been widely recognized as a masculine form, in *Graffiti Grrlz: Performing Feminism in the Hip Hop Diaspora*, performance studies scholar Jessica Nydia Pabón-Colón critiques "the idea that (cisgender) boys and men do graffiti to construct and affirm their masculine identities." This theory of masculinity is offered in Nancy Macdonald's *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity in London and New York*.[84] Pabón-Colón argues that the theory of masculinity in graffiti that Macdonald poses does not leave room for a more nuanced analysis of gender performance politics. Pabón-Colón offers feminist masculinity as a descriptor that engages the complex gender politics of women who tag. She argues that feminist masculinity is a gender performance that uses masculinity for feminist ends and very much along Joan Morgan's notion of Hip Hop feminism that "fucks with the grays".[85] Pabón-Colón compares her notion of feminist masculinity to Jack Halberstam's notion of female masculinity but Pabón-Colón argues that feminist masculinity unlike female masculinity can operate without a direct expression of gender queer transidentity or queerness. Pabón-Colón argues that feminist masculinity does not need to come at the cost of taggers' femininity. I use Palacios' colonial girlhood and Pabón-Colón feminist masculinity to think about two different methods that young Brown femmes[86] use to navigate space and place; tagging and dress.

The Aztek Queen tag in image 5 evokes a racialized and gendered brown femme identity. Although a tag alone does not reveal the identity of a tagger, the color choice, symbolism and

[83] Lena C. Palacios "Ain't no justice... it's just us": Girls organizing against sexual and carceral violence." In *Girlhood and the Politics of Place*. Berghahn Books, 2016.
[84] Jessica Nydia Pabón-Colón, *Graffiti Grrlz: Performing Feminism in the Hip Hop Diaspora*. NYU Press, 2018.
[85] Joan, Morgan. *When chickenheads come home to roost: A hip-hop feminist breaks it down*. Simon and Schuster, 2017.
[86] I use the term femmes instead of women or girls because I do not know how the tagger identifies.

name represents a self-made identity that the tagger wants to portray. A bright pink color is widely recognized as a feminine color, as this tagger proudly writes Aztek Queen and a heart on a black cylinder surface of a light pole. The heart and color choice are making or remaking a feminine identity for the unknown tagger, while their name Aztek Queen evokes a Latinx identity which would most likely be Mexican due to Aztec empire's rule in what is now Mexico. What does it mean for a person to tag Aztek Queen in an area experiencing gentrification? The loud feminine color and unapologetic Brown name makes it known that Brown girls are still here and taking up space, even if it is just their name. When Mexican taggers evoke indigenous symbolism, such as the Olmec head seen in the previous section, they use Mexican indigenous culture that elides that Los Angeles is Tongva land, revealing an important tension in the layered geographies of space and representation in settler colonial histories and legacies.

(Image 8. Tags on park trashcan and park bench in Echo Park Lake)

Creating a feminine identity through graffiti is not only a practice done by cisgender women. In an interview conducted for my undergraduate thesis, Val, a nonbinary queer person discusses their experience with tagging. They say:

"... for the most part my graffiti writing was a way for me to establish an identity outside of the one I was born with. I used to like ending my tag with a little heart as a way to make it seem more feminine...I was trying to make a feminine identity..."

For Val, the reconstruction and transformation of a feminine identity was pertinent to their livelihood. They grew up in a strict heterocisnormative household. Val was able to use graffiti to facilitate a process of recreating an identity with which they identified.[87]

It is common practice for graffiti tools to be part of the terms under a gang injunction. Graffiti writers can face incarceration, fines, and enhanced prison sentencing for simply possessing graffiti paraphernalia such as spray paint and slap tags. The criminalization of place making practices such as graffiti has not been the only element of gang injunctions to police youth of color's expression practices. Another stipulation from the Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction is the criminalization of styles of dress that are considered "gang associated". The following is a list of all items that are banned under the Glendale Corridor gang injunction:

Diamond Supply Co. gear of a picture of a diamond

Duke Blue Devils gear

Aztec warrior symbols

90026 zip code

Los Angeles Dodger's logo

Rhino logo from Marc Ecko gear

Mickey's Malt Liquor hornet

Any gear with the letter B, including but not limited to the Boston Bruins, Brooklyn Dodgers, and UCLA Bruins

A frog

The color green

[87] Kimberly Soriano, *Reclaiming Space: Latinx Taggers Creating Knowledge and Resilience from the Margins*. 2016.

The color blue

Belt buckle with the letter E[88]

Although gang injunctions are commonly seen as placing racial and class boundaries within the areas they are impose, there is little to no discussion on how gang injunctions police gender performance and sexuality. Examining symbols and brands that are listed in *People v. Big Top Locos* as determining gang membership within the Glendale Corridor Gang Injunction safety zone, we can engage a closer reading of how such policies signify the policing of gender and sexuality.

Scholarship by Nikki Jones, Norma Mendoza-Denton and Catherine Ramirez consider style as a signifying practice within people of color but more specifically women and girls of color. [89] Mendoza-Denton examines how cholas (Latina gang girls) perform and embody a specific kind of femininity that challenges hegemonic notions of girlhood and womanhood through their style.[90] Ramirez's *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory* refers to zoot subculture as a racialized and gendered signifying practice via clothing, hair, and cosmetics during a time of extreme U.S. nationalism during World War II. Ramirez argues these style politics, as embodied by black and Mexican youth were seen an expression of difference from and resistance to hegemonic whiteness.[91] Ramirez writes, "the zoot suit was construed as a sign of an aberrant femininity, competing masculinity, or

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[88] People v. Big Top Locos qtd. Muñiz, Ana. *Police, Power and the Production of Racial Boundaries.* Rutgers University Press. 2015. 86

[89] Nikki, Jones. *Between good and ghetto: African American girls and inner-city violence*. Rutgers University Press, 2009.
Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 'Muy Macha': Gender and ideology in gang-girls' discourse about makeup , Ethnos, 61:1-2, 1996
Catherine S. Ramírez, *The woman in the zoot suit: Gender, nationalism, and the cultural politics of memory*. Duke University Press, 2010.

[90] Norma Mendoza-Denton, 'Muy Macha': Gender and ideology in gang-girls' discourse about makeup , Ethnos, 61:1-2, 1996

[91] Catherine S. Ramírez, 56

homosexuality during the early 1940s. As nonwhite, working class, queer signifier, it was perceived as un-American."[92] Engaging this early moment of deviance and resistance in relations to zoot suiters, Ramirez offers an opportunity to consider racialized gender, class, and style politics as a third hueco negro, creating linkages to nonnormative and queer racialized gender performances and aesthetics of Latinx taggers in L.A.

The list of banned clothing in the Glendale Corridor Gang injunction is explicitly racialized, classed, and gendered because most people in Los Angeles can be found wearing any item listed, yet brown and black people are forbidden from wearing the same articles of clothing in Echo Park. There is strategic geographical significance to most clothing items on the list as well. It is particularly notable that Dodger's team gear is forbidden, even though the stadium is located in the vicinity of Echo Park. The list of forbidden articles of clothing belong to a geographically specific Latinx masculinity that is perceived to lay outside of white hegemonic notions of gender performance.

[92] Ibid.

Gang injunctions police Latinx gang aesthetics but also all brown bodies in particular contested spaces or layered geographies. Whether or not the brown body wearing the style belongs to a gang, the act of stepping out of traditional notions of femininity and masculinity in style or aesthetic performance call for punishment on behalf of the state. An officer is quoted in Ana Muñiz's *Police, Power and the Production of Racial Boundaries* explains, "there are specific criteria we look for and document: self-admission, gang tattoos, gang clothing, being in a neighborhood. etc."[93] Just by "being in a neighborhood" we see particular bodies come under surveillance and scrutiny for practices of consumption and style that are coded as suspect. Ostensibly those self-styled bodies in the neighborhood may present a range of gender expressions, and they may wear blue, green, B's or other prohibited fashion in the face of restriction and at great personal risk. Style and performance as a signifier of gender identity must be negotiated in conjunction with race and class when people of color navigate cartographies of violence produced by gang injunctions.

Ephemeral Archive: Reading Graffiti as Visual Spatial Disruptions to Gentrification

[93] Ana Muñiz, 86.

(Image 9, TST on Carondelet and Beverly Blvd.)

On North Carondelet St. and Beverly Blvd., a construction site took up what could have easily been four potential parking spots in a neighborhood where local parking space is already scarce. This construction site seemed oddly placed among single story homes and larger apartment buildings. As construction workers hurried to clean up the projects' scraps and dump them into the trash bin seen in the picture, I saw the large placa of a local gang, Temple Street. North Carondelet is a cross street for Beverly Blvd. and Temple St. is to the left of the trash bin pictured above.

As I took this picture, I pondered on the nature of the tag, which you do not see much of in the neighborhood of Historic Filipinotown, a district housed in both Echo Park and Westlake. This bin did not last long in this location. Once the construction job was finished, the bin along with any artifacts of construction disappeared. The bin may be continuously traveling,

taking Temple St.'s place and the sign of the brown body that tagged the placa with it crossing raced, classed and gendered boundaries where the body of the tagger perhaps cannot cross.

The placa of TST in this image disrupts the visual narratives implied and inscribed by developers independently of any recognition of people from the neighborhood. The aesthetic of the new apartment complexes has a signature architecture that connotes gentrification: a sanitized modernism. This image shows how tagging (whether in the form of idealized graffiti or criminalized "gang graffiti" otherwise known as placas) disrupt a process of spatial whitewashing. The presence of the brown body is etched in this bin immortalized until buffed or painted over.

If you walk around the neighborhood of Echo Park, graffiti and placas are all over construction sites. Taggers either tag on the building itself or tarps protecting the site as seen in image 9. This construction site since then has been completed and the fences and taggings have disappeared. Using graffiti as an object of analysis has proven to be demanding, to follow a tag that may or may not be there when you come back to it. Part of the ephemerality of graffiti is what drew me to study it. In an ever-changing neighborhood such as Echo Park, markings such as graffiti present a voice that has been excluded, policed and exterminated through state violence. In this final section, I am interested in graffiti on construction sites as a direct response to gentrification. As new developments occur in the Echo Park area, writers of both graffiti and placas take advantage of the space and repurpose it for their own needs.

José Esteban Muñoz positions disidentificatory performance as a "world-making" practice done by queer people of color.[94] I frame tagging created by racialized people as visual ephemeral examples of place making where potentiality of identifying with a neighborhood can

[94] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of color and the performance of politics*. Vol. 2. U of Minnesota Press, 1999.

exist but is not allowed to permanently stay. Muñoz defines ephemera for queer people of color as, "leaving too much of a trace has often meant that the queer subject has left herself open for attack. Instead of being clearly available as visible evidence, queerness has instead existed as innuendo, gossip, fleeting moments, and performances that are meant to be interacted with by those within its epistemological sphere--while evaporating at the touch of those who would eliminate queer possibility."[95] Muñoz engagement with queer of color cultures and its nature of ephemerality brings up the importance of temporality and movement for survival. For graffiti writers, movement is important. If writers are caught writing on surfaces they can be arrested, fined and incarcerated. Similarly, by seeking spots that only other community taggers would recognize as prestigious, many taggers tag on surfaces that speak only to the community of taggers instead of to a broader audience.

(Image 10. Throwies on construction site gate on Alvarado Blvd. 2018)

[95] José Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemera as evidence: Introductory notes to queer acts." (1996): 5-16.

According to *The Eastsider*, about 500 new apartments in 11 different developments are either already built or in the process of being built.[96] These new apartments are all in the Echo Park and neighboring Historic Filipinotown area. Image 11 was written on a new development in Echo Park/Historic Filipinotown on a development named Cactus; branded as designer loft apartments. According to Cactus' website a one bedroom apartment is 1,975 a month while a two bedroom is $2,695.[97] With the surge of new developments in a small area, youth of color are speaking back to their cultural and physical displacement through graffiti as seen in the images of this section. Although anti-gentrification organizers create narratives of Echo Park complacency with gentrification these tags and placas show that there is a need to be seen, felt and acknowledged even when the brown body cannot be physically present.

(Image 11. Permanent marker on glass window. Photo by author.)

[96] The Eastsider. "A New Look on Temple St." *The Eastsider*. 5 June 2017 https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/viewer?mid=1CZFNTQuhzOcQXoaKtTQzOe3Td-Q&ll=34.071968529835466%2C-118.26476057415766&z=15

[97] "New Construction - Cactus Loft Apartments for Lease in Echo Park." Cactus Apartments Los Angeles

The Suzuki tag was done most likely with a permanent marker on a glass window. Most taggers who want their tag to last on a glass window use Etch also known as glass eater, an acid that eats away at glass and secures a semi-permanent tag. The Suzuki tag however seems to come from someone who is beginning to tag: the 1r stands for oner, meaning they do not belong to any crew or gang. Although not in community, Suzuki continues to create an alternative and direct opposition to gentrifying forces. The glass window belongs to a new development of luxury apartments in a working-class area. Knowingly tagging a clear window of a new development with something as liminal as a marker clearly demonstrates a greater yearn for presence and identification in a quick changing neighborhood. I argue that this form of tagging is an example of ephemeral place making for youth of color, the awareness that a marking can be easily wiped off yet risking freedom for their name on this new development.

Conclusion

Gentrification experienced by Echo Park has displaced families and networks built by and for immigrant Latinx communities. Anti-gentrification organizing has used slogans that reinforce Echo Park as a white space, meaning the project of gentrification has exterminated Latinx culture, aesthetics and presence when in fact I argue that graffiti and gang placas serve as remnants as working class of color presence. I further look at sites such as Chavez Ravine and The Belmont Tunnel, I trace how an affective economy of white pleasure has not only changed one of the few sites of joy that Latinx people had in Echo Park but ultimately confines people of color from being able to access public space. People of color continue to transgress narratives that gentrification imposes on their home by threatening white traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. Narratives that are used in favor of gentrification argue that mixed-income

communities bring culture to working class communities. My research argues that Latinx communities already create culture that is constantly erased due gentrification.

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